

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3 - 6 and 8 through 19 are in the application and are presented for consideration. By this amendment, Applicant has canceled claims 2 and included the subject matter of this claim in claim 1. The dependency of claim 4 has been changed. Claim 7 has been canceled. Minor corrections have been made to claim 14. Further, Applicant has made changes to each of the independent claims, based on a brief telephone interview with the Examiner. The changes are made to further highlight important aspects of the overall combination. Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for the courtesy of the telephone interview.

The specification has been objected to with regard to the means – plus – function language of the claims and support for this in the specification. Applicant has now revised the specification to provide the wording as suggested. It should be apparent from the specification and claims that the coupling means includes each side of the coupler, such as pins on one side and a socket on another side, as disclosed. The changes to the specification simply relate to the use of the term means and a proper reference to each side of the means, namely the male and female side of the coupler. It is believed that no new issues are raised by this change and no new matter has been added. Accordingly, it is requested that the objections to the claims and to the specification be withdrawn.

Based on a brief telephone discussion with the Examiner, Applicant has made changes to the claims to highlight important aspects of the invention. It is Applicant's position that the claims as now presented patentably define over the prior art including Prendergast (US

5,873,371) and Kerns et al. (US 4,756,706). It is Applicant's position that Prendergast does not teach each and every feature arranged as specified in the claims and that Kerns et al. does not teach each feature arranged as specified in the claims. Further, the prior art as a whole fails to suggest the combination of features as claimed.

Applicant requests favorable consideration of the claims as now presented. Favorable action on the merits is requested.

Respectfully submitted
for Applicant,



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SHOULD ANY OTHER FEE BE REQUIRED, THE PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE IS HEREBY REQUESTED TO CHARGE SUCH FEE TO OUR DEPOSIT ACCOUNT 13-0410.